XXXII.—*On some rare or unfigured Palæarctic Birds' Eggs.*

By H. E. Dresser.

(Plate IX.)

Having undertaken to write some papers on Birds' eggs for 'The Ibis,' I feel that I cannot do better than follow in the footsteps of Professor Newton, who for some years past has contributed articles to the 'Proceedings' of the Zoological Society on "New or Rare Birds' Eggs," the last of which appeared in 1897 (P. Z. S. 1897, p. 890, pl. li.); but I propose to confine myself exclusively to the eggs of Palæarctic species, and especially to such as have not yet been figured, or have been inadequately delineated. I will commence with the Thrushes, of several of which the breeding-habits and eggs have only been described at a comparatively recent date.

Turdus dubius Bechst. (*T. fuscatus* Pall.). Dusky Thrush. (Pl. IX. figs. 1–4.)

The first notice that I can find respecting the nidification of the present species appears to be that of Dr. Dybowski, who states (J. f. O. 1872, p. 437) that it "nests on the Angara in the vicinity of Ussola," but he does not appear to have obtained its eggs. The late Mr. Seebohm, when he visited the Yenesei in 1877, found a nest of this Thrush, but it contained young birds; and Mr. H. L. Popham appears to have been the first to procure authenticated eggs, when in 1875 he took several nests on the Yenesei River, shooting the parent birds to ensure identification. Again in 1897 he took five nests at Doodinka (lat. 69½° N.). These, he writes (Ibis, 1898, p. 493), "were generally placed in small isolated trees, and rarely on the ground, though none were more than two feet from it." The nest he describes as being exactly like that of a Fieldfare, with a lining of mud, and a final bedding of dry grass. The eggs vary from the ordinary Blackbird type to that of the Fieldfare, the size being about the same as in *T. atrigularis*.

Turdus obscurus Gmel. Pale Thrush. (Pl. IX. figs. 5–8.)

The first authentic description of the nesting-habits, nest and eggs of this Thrush appears to be that of Dr. Dybowski

(J. f. O. 1872, p. 441), which I translated *in extenso* in my 'Birds of Europe' in 1878. There I also gave some notes from the writings of the late Mr. Seebohm, who found it breeding on the Yenesei in 1877, and took his first nest, containing five eggs, on the 27th of June at Koorayika. Mr. Popham also took three nests at Inbatskaya (lat. 64° N.) on the Yenesei in 1897, and has given (Ibis, 1898, p. 493) full particulars respecting the same.

The nest of this species is either placed near the ground (Mr. Popham found one on a stump about four feet above it) or on a branch, or near the main stem of a larch or fir-tree at a height of from 15 to 20 feet, and is, like that of a Fieldfare, strongly built, and lined with fine grass and dry larch-needles. The number of eggs is four or five, seldom six, and they are smaller than any of the others here described, averaging 1·06 by 0·75 in. They are also rather less subject to variation, and are somewhat darker and more blue in ground-colour. One clutch is rather of the Blackbird type, but the rest are more or less spotted and blotched with rusty red. A clutch of four eggs from Darasun in Dauria, received from Dr. Dybowski, closely resemble some of those taken by Mr. Popham on the Yenesei, both in size and coloration, and one of these I have figured (see fig. 8) for comparison.

Turdus atrigularis Temm. Black-throated Thrush. (Pl. IX. figs. 9–12.)

Herr Tancré of Anclam received eggs, stated to belong to this Thrush, from his collectors in the Altai Mountains, but they do not appear to have been properly identified; and the first authenticated eggs were, I believe, those taken by Mr. Popham at Inbatskaya on the Yenesei River in 1897, where he obtained five nests, each containing six eggs. The nests, he writes (Ibis, 1898, p. 494), were "composed of dry grass with a lining of mud and an inner lining of broad dry grass, and all were placed in small fir-trees close to the stem (except one, which was on the top of a stump) at heights varying between 3 feet and 6 feet." This species is said to

occur in summer in the Himalayas, but its nest has not been found there. The eggs from the Yenesei vary considerably, some almost exactly resembling the ordinary type of the Blackbird, whereas others are more like those of the Mistle-Thrush, but have the ground-colour of a deeper blue. In size they vary from 1·08 to 1·15 by 0·77 to 0·84 in. The eggs of a clutch in my collection received from Herr Tancré closely resemble the first figure (fig. 9), but are larger, measuring 1·21 by 0·86 in.

Turdus sibiricus Pall. Siberian Thrush. (Pl. IX. figs. 13–16.)

Nothing appears to have been known respecting the nidification of this Thrush until the nest was found on the Yenesei River by Mr. Popham in 1895, at Toorukhansk (lat. 66° N.). He there took several nests, but was in no case able to procure the parent bird in order to identify the eggs. In 1897, however, he was more fortunate in this respect, and was thus enabled to prove the authenticity of the specimens taken in 1895, as the eggs of this Thrush are readily distinguishable from those of any other of the species breeding on the Yenesei. Moreover, it nests rather later than the other Thrushes. The nest, he writes (Ibis, 1898, p. 495), is "of the usual type, a rather untidy structure of dry grass, built in the fork of a willow a few feet from the ground, not so bulky as a Fieldfare's, with a scanty wall of mud and an inner lining of coarse dry grass. Four of my clutches somewhat resemble eggs of the Mistle-Thrush, one of which has the blue rather darker than the remainder; in another the eggs are very small and very pale bluish white in ground-colour; one clutch has the ground-colour very pale blue-green and is covered all over the surface of the shell with minute reddish spots. The eggs measure from 1·02 in. long by 0·78 in. broad to 1·18 in. long by 0·87 in. broad."

Mr. Alan Owston of Yokohama has also obtained the eggs of this Thrush in Japan at Fuji, Sagami Hills, and Novikurayama, where it nests in cherry, pine, chestnut, and gumi (*Eleagnus umbellata*) trees at a height of from six to

fifteen feet, most often in a cherry-tree about ten feet from the ground. Eggs were taken from the 12th of May to the 28th of July. I have compared specimens from Japan with those obtained by Mr. Popham, and two, from one clutch, agree very closely with fig. 13, but all the rest, though of the same type, are more finely marked, paler, and considerably larger, measuring 1·24 by 0·82 to 1·36 by 0·86 in., while none of the Japanese eggs have the ground-colour bluish, as is the case with almost all those from the Yenesei.

Glaucidium passerinum (Linn.). Pigmy Owl.

Dr. Rey, in his 'Eier der Vögel Mitteleuropas,' now in course of publication (p. 57), on the authority of Mr. Othmar Reiser of Sarajevo, casts doubt on the authenticity of the eggs of this Owl taken in April 1862 near Cilli by the late Mr. E. Seidensacher, and says that without doubt those of *Nyctala tengmalmi* were mistaken for them. One of them is in my collection, and I have carefully compared it with eggs of *N. tengmalmi* taken in Norway, and with a clutch of the same taken near Cilli by Mr. Seidensacher, and I certainly cannot endorse Mr. Reiser's opinion. The egg of *G. passerinum* is considerably smaller than any that I have seen of *N. tengmalmi*, and in fact than any egg of *Scops giu* in my collection. Besides, Seidensacher was a most careful observer, and was well acquainted with all the birds in his neighbourhood. I can also testify to his extreme care in the identification of eggs, more especially of the rarer species, having collected in company with him for one season in the vicinity of Cilli. Mr. Reiser claims authenticity for two eggs taken by the Rev. Blasius Hanf, near Furtteich, against those taken by Seidensacher, but does not say how they were identified or whether Mr. Hanf obtained the parent bird, so I conclude that he did not do so.

On the whole, especially as I know how careful and conscientious a collector Seidensacher was, I still believe fully in the authenticity of the eggs which he identified as those of *G. passerinum*. Mr. Reiser further states that there is only one of these eggs in the collection of Baron Richard Koenig

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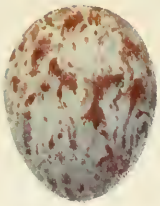

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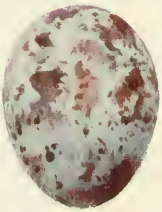

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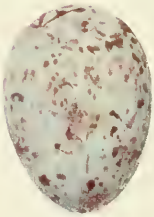

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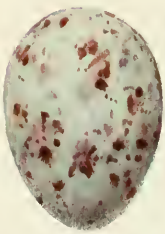

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EGGS OF SIBERIAN THRUSHES.

Warthausen, whereas I understood from Seidensacher that he parted with two to that gentleman, and sent the third to me.

In conclusion, I may state that in the case of the eggs now figured, which were obtained by Mr. Popham, the parent birds were shot in almost every instance, so that there can be no doubt whatever of their authenticity.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE IX.

Eggs of *Turdus dubius*, p. 445.

Fig. 1 (clutch 498). Yenesei, 27th June, 1900.
2 („ 503). „ 28th „
3 („ 493). „ 15th „
4 („ 332). „ 23rd June, 1899.

Eggs of *Turdus obscurus*, p. 445.

5 (clutch 463). Yenesei, 17th June, 1900.
6 („ 271). „ 13th June, 1897.
7 („ 273). „ 14th „
8 („ 278 *β*). Darasun, Dauria (*Dr. Dybowski*).

Eggs of *Turdus atrigularis*, p. 446.

9 (clutch 269). Yenesei, 13th June, 1897.
10 („ 267). „ „
11 („ 269). „ „
12 („ 209). „ „

Eggs of *Turdus sibiricus*, p. 447.

13 (clutch 307). Yenesei, 20th June, 1897.
14 („ 461). „ 13th June, 1900.
15 („ 24). Toorukhansk, 15th June, 1895.
16 („ 300). Yenesei, 19th June, 1897.

XXXIII.—*Supplementary Notes on the Birds of the Yenisei River.* By H. Leyborne Popham.

(Plate X.)

May 8th, 1900, found me once more at Yeniseisk, accompanied by Mr. Gerald R. Peck, an ardent sportsman. The ice on the Yenisei had broken up some few days before our